

IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

Applicants: Akihiko HIRANO et al.
Serial No.: Not yet assigned
Continuation of USSN 09/986,597
Filed: Even date herewith
For: **DECODING APPARATUS AND DECODING METHOD
(as amended)**
Group: 2651 (expected)
Examiner: Rocio Colon (expected)

CLAIM FOR PRIORITY

Commissioner for Patents
P.O. Box 1450
Alexandria, VA 22313-1450

January 22, 2004

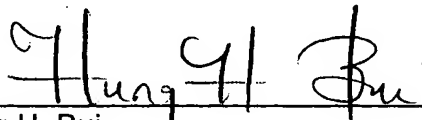
Sir:

Pursuant to 35 U.S.C. §119 and 37 CFR 1.55, the applicants hereby claim the right of priority based on the following foreign application filed in Japan:

Application No. 11-139693 filed on May 20, 1999.

A certified copy of this foreign application was filed on March 3, 2000, in application Serial No. 09/502,056, the grandparent application of the present continuation application.

Respectfully submitted,
ANTONELLI, TERRY, STOUT & KRAUS, LLP



HHB:btd
(703) 312-6600

Hung H. Bui
Registration No. 40,415